

## Trust to provide valuable input towards education



### **TRUST TO PROVIDE VALUABLE INPUT TOWARDS EDUCATION**

By Warren Blunt

Photo : Warren Blunt

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Judge Joseph Raulinga, Chairperson of the District Steering Committee in the Vhembe district for the National Education Collaboration Trust.

Joseph Raulinga, High Court Judge and Chairperson of the District Steering Committee of the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) for the Vhembe district sees the provision of quality education to every child as the most important factor in eradicating poverty in the rural areas of South Africa.

Having grown up in one of the more remote areas of the country, Judge Raulinga is well versed in the challenges of bringing a fully functioning education system with proper classrooms and motivated educators to the children of Vhembe. He is also involved with many community leadership initiatives, among these serving as the advisor and coordinator of the Madombidzha Education Trust where he facilitated in the raising of R1,2 million towards building six classrooms, a laboratory and library at Litshovhu Secondary School.

In an exclusive interview with Polokwane Observer Raulinga said he was excited about the role of the NECT in bringing a meaningful change to education in Vhembe, as the objectives of the body have been formulated as a business, labour and civil society initiative to support the Education Sector Plan within the National Development Plan (NDP). "All of the important stakeholders, including government, involved in education in South Africa share ideas at NECT meetings with the common vision of improving the standard of education throughout the country," Raulinga elaborated on the role of the NECT, which presently has a large footprint in Vhembe.

"Vhembe has over 1 000 schools and many have dilapidated infrastructure and a lack of suitably qualified teachers and together with one of NECT's lead agents, Deloitte Touche we have identified 61 Fresh Start schools that will be totally revamped over the next three years," Raulinga said and added, "Many retired circuit managers and principals are among the change agents recruited by the NECT because we don't want to lose their expertise.

"In fact the NECT is busy engaging with all stakeholders involved with education, including councillors, traditional leaders and mayors of municipalities in Vhembe as they are closely involved with the communities to address the current problems facing education in the district. We also intend holding meetings with unions, school governing bodies, parents, principals and teachers in order to share a common vision to enhance the quality education in a mostly rural district like Vhembe."

As many parents and care givers in the district have low literacy levels Raulinga is concerned about their role in providing assistance with their children's homework. "Therefore at a meeting held recently the idea of setting up centres for learners to be accommodated after school hours was discussed and may be implemented in the future," he explained.

It is important to Raulinga that businesses in the Vhembe district provide support towards developing education and five entities have been approached by the NECT for involvement in this regard. "Education can unlock the shackles of poverty and also unlock the economic potential of Vhembe and the country as a whole and it is important for the education of our children to be taken seriously," Raulinga said.

He concluded that the NECT is already making a difference in Vhembe and with national government allowing big business, labour and civil society to become actively involved in the decision-making process of education this will be a giant step forward for education in South Africa.